

Civic E-Participation in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract : Civic participation is an important aspect of democracy. The contemporary model of democracy is based on citizens' participation in political decision-making (deliberative democracy, participatory democracy). This participation takes many forms of activities like display of slogans and symbols, voting, social consultations, political demonstrations, membership in political parties or organizing civil disobedience. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 are characterized by great social, economic and political diversity. Civil society is also part of the process of democratization. Civil society, funded by the rule of law, civil rights, such as freedom of speech and association and private ownership, was to play a central role in the development of liberal democracy. Among the many interpretations of concepts, defining the concept of contemporary democracy, one can assume that the terms civil society and democracy, although different in meaning, nowadays overlap. In the post-communist countries, the process of shaping and maturing societies took place in the context of a struggle with a state governed by undemocratic power. State fraud or repudiation of the institution is a representative state, which in the past was the only way to manifest and defend its identity, but after the breakthrough became one of the main obstacles to the development of civil society. In Central and Eastern Europe, there are many obstacles to the development of civil society, for example, the elimination of economic poverty, the implementation of educational campaigns, consciousness-related obstacles, the formation of social capital and the deficit of social activity. Obviously, civil society does not only entail an electoral turnout but a broader participation in the decision-making process, which is impossible without direct and participative democratic institutions. This article considers such broad forms of civic participation and their characteristics in Central and Eastern Europe. The paper attempts to analyze the functioning of electronic forms of civic participation in Central and Eastern European states. This is not accompanied by a referendum or a referendum initiative, and other forms of political participation, such as public consultations, participative budgets, or e-Government. However, this paper will broadly present electronic administration tools, the application of which results from both legal regulations and increasingly common practice in state and city management. In the comparative analysis, the experiences of post-communist bloc countries will be summed up to indicate the challenges and possible goals for further development of this form of citizen participation in the political process. The author argues that for to function efficiently and effectively, states need to involve their citizens in the political decision-making process, especially with the use of electronic tools.

Keywords : Central and Eastern Europe, e-participation, e-government, post-communism

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